

Colonial Families of the Americas  
Lineage Number 11: Cabanis/Cabaniss of  
Virginia & Alabama

by James Allen Cabaniss

Reprinted from  
THE COLONIAL GENEALOGIST III:3, 1971.

Correction, TCG:III:4:258

Reprinted from  
THE COLONIAL GENEALOGIST III:4, 1971

Copyright 1971 The Hartwell Company

More Cabanissiana

by [James] Allen Cabaniss

Reprinted from  
THE COLONIAL GENEALOGIST VII:2, 1974

Copyright 1974 The Augustan Society, Inc.

PASCAGOULA LIBRARY  
(P) ALOGY COLLECTION  
(P) NOT CIRCULATE

The Augustan Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box P  
Torrance, California 90507

Reprinted with permission 1983.

# COLONIAL FAMILIES OF THE AMERICAS

LINEAGE NUMBER 11:

JAMES ALLEN CABANISS

CABANIS/CABANISS OF VIRGINIA &amp; ALABAMA

Ancestry:

Descendant of HENRI CABANIS, who died in Prince George County, Virginia, before 9 August 1720.

Biographical notes: Professor James Allen Cabaniss

B.A. (Honors), Southwestern at Memphis, 1932; B.D., Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1935; Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1939; Presbyterian minister (Stated Clerk, Synod of Mississippi, 1960-1964); U.S.A.A.F., 1943-1946, highest rank, Major; Professor of History at The University of Mississippi since 1946 (Chairman of the Department, 1961-1964; Research Professor since 1968). Author: eight books and over two hundred scholarly articles in learned journals. Member of The Institute for Advance Study, Princeton, New Jersey, 1952-1953; Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Chevalier, L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques.

Memberships: Masonic--Grand Master of Masons in Mississippi, 1962; Grand Master, Grand Council of Mississippi, R. & S.M., 1964; Grand Commander of Knights Templar in Mississippi, 1970; Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in Mississippi, 1972. National Society Sons of the American Revolution, President, Mississippi Society, 1966-67; Sons of Confederate Veterans, National Chaplain, 1937-1938, State Chaplain, 1970-1971; General Society of Colonial Wars, Chaplain, Mississippi Society since 1961; Order of the Crown of Charlemagne, Councillor since 1964; National Society of Americans of Royal Descent, Historian General since 1965; Jamestowne Society, Deputy Governor, Tennessee Company, 1966-1967; Huguenot Society of the Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia, 3rd National Vice-President, 1969-1971, President Mississippi Branch, 1967-1971; Order of the Three Crusades, Publications Committee and Historical Activities Committee since 1965; Order of Americans of Armorial Ancestry; Order of First Families of Virginia (five eligibilities); Order of the Crown in America; Military Order of the Crusades; Colonial Order of the Crown; Baronial Order of Magna Carta (descent from fourteen of the seventeen barons who had issue); Society of Descendants of Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Garter (ten descents); Huguenot Society of America; Society of Descendants of Francis Epes I of Virginia; General Society of the War of 1812.

Listed in *Who's Who in America*, 33 (1964-1965), 34 (1966-1967), 35 (1968-1969).



1. HENRI CABANIS, born in southern France during the latter half of the seventeenth century, died in Prince George County, Virginia, before 9 August 1720. After 1708 he married in Virginia, as his third wife, MARY (probably HARRISON), who survived him.

As a French Protestant, HENRI CABANIS had to leave his homeland, after revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), because of his religion. Migrating perhaps by way of Switzerland and Holland, he found asylum in England, where preparations were made to transport him and his companions to the colony of Virginia.

Before 1700 he had married a French wife, MARIE, and had one son named HENRI. These three were among the 205 émigrés on the *Mary and Ann* from Gravesend harbor under leadership of OLIVIER, Marquis de la Muze, an elder of the Reformed Church in Nantes, and CHARLES DE SAILLY.

After thirteen weeks at sea, the ship arrived on 23 July 1700 at the mouth of the James River in Virginia. Thence the French were conveyed to and located at Manakin Town, where Henry remained for a while, being enumerated in the Manakin census of early 1702. Nothing further is known until 1 May 1708, by which time he was living in Henrico County, having been granted 200 acres of land there. His first wife had died and he had married a refugee widow named MAGDALENE, by whom he had no issue, although by a former marriage she had a daughter named MAGDALENE.

Some time thereafter she, too, died, whereupon he married his third wife, a Virginian named MARY (presumed to be a HARRISON), who survived him. By her he had two sons, MATTHEW and GEORGE. Another gap in the record follows until his undated will was presented in court on 9 August 1720 at Merchants Hope, Prince George County. An inventory of his estate was made and presented on

the following 9th of January 1720/1.

It is from these meager data that anything is known about Henri Cabanis, a progenitor of the family in the United States. Appearing to be deeply religious, smart in dress, convivial, literate, and able to play a violin, he was by no means wealthy and he was not a landowner or planter. He had learned the skill of goldsmithy and he was probably a small scale banker or money-lender. But he had made powerful friends in Virginia, Colonel FRANCIS EPES, Jr. being executor of his will.

#### References:

Ship list of the *Mary and Ann*, dated 31 July 1700, naming "Henri Cabanis, sa femme et un enfant," in R. A. Brock, *Documents Chiefly Unpublished, Relating to the Huguenot Emigration to Virginia and to the Settlement at Manakin-Town* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966, a reissue of 1962 reprint of original 1886 publication), p. 252; William Byrd's list of refugees at Manakin, dated 10 November 1701, in the same book, p. 46; land grant naming Henri's first and second wives, dated 1 May 1708, Henrico County Orders, p. 35; Henri's will, naming his third wife and three sons, Prince George County Deed Book, pp. 414, 415 (dated 9 August 1720); inventory of Henri's estate, same Deed Book, pp. 430, 431 (dated 9 January 1720/1).

2. MATTHEW CABANIS(S), born in Prince George County, Virginia, between 1709 and 1720 (probably about 1712-1715), died in Nottoway County between 6 June 1789 and 5 August 1790. By 9 May 1738 he was married to HANNAH CLAY, who survived him.

MATTHEW CABANIS(S) married well and at his death possessed extensive wealth in land and slaves. His wife was a daughter of Colonel THOMAS CLAY and a great-aunt of the Kentucky statesman, HENRY CLAY. Too old for military duty during the American Revolution, Matthew performed patriotic public service. He was not only a landowner and planter, but also (like GEORGE WASHINGTON) a surveyor and (like THOMAS JEFFERSON) an advocate of religious freedom in Virginia.

Matthew and Hannah had twelve children, six daughters (ANN, married --LUMKIN; MARY, married --BELCHER; PHEBE, married FRANCIS BELCHER; HANNAH, married JOHN CLARKE; ELIZABETH; AMEY CLAY) and six sons (CHARLES, MATTHEW Jr., JOHN, GEORGE, HENRY, ELIJAH).

#### References:

Marriage indicated in Prince George Minute Book, 1737-1741, p. 118 (dated 9 May 1738); surveyor,

Amelia County Order Book 1, pp. 125, 311 (dated September 1740 and April 1745); religion, Amelia County Legislative Petitions, folio 464 (dated 12 May 1780); will, naming wife and children, dated 6 June 1789, probated 5 August 1790, Nottoway County Will Book 1, p. 20.

3. JOHN CABANISS, born in Amelia County, Virginia, about 1746, died in Jones County, Georgia, before 14 August 1820. He was married before 9 October 1779, probably in Lunenburg County, Virginia, to ELIZABETH (almost certainly an EPES), who predeceased him.

JOHN CABANISS lived during the earlier part of his life in Amelia and Lunenburg counties, Virginia, where he married. Circumstantial evidence is quite strong that his wife was an Epes. By her he had apparently only one child, a son WILLIAM. She died early and he never remarried. It appears that he made his home with his brother CHARLES.

Near the end of the eighteenth century JOHN and CHARLES, with their Amelia County brothers GEORGE and HENRY, migrated through North Carolina to Georgia, where in the newly erected county of Jones (created 1807) they served as surveyors. When JOHN died intestate, he left an estate of \$20,000.

#### References:

Land transactions, Amelia County Deed Book 10, p. 109 (24 November 1768), and 12, p. 95 (22 July 1773); records of tithes and taxes in Lunenburg County, 1769, 1772, 1773, 1776, 1783, in Landon C. Bell, *Sunlight on the Southside* (privately printed, 1931), pp. 271, 272, 323, 373, 403; in A.B. Fotherfill and J.N. Naugle, *Virginia Tax Payers 1782-1787* (Richmond, 1940), listed alphabetically; and in "specific tax" register manuscripts, Box 11, Virginia State Library; land sale, naming wife, Lunenburg Deed Book 13, p. 253 (9 October 1779); death indicated, Jones County, Georgia, Minute Book, 1818-1825, p. 32 (14 August 1820); see also *The Huguenot*, XI, p. 85.

4. WILLIAM CABANISS, born about 1768-1772, probably in Lunenburg County, Virginia, died in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, after 21 July 1825. He married as his third (possibly second) wife the widow SOPHIA (SHERWIN) PINCHAM in Nottoway County, Virginia, on or after 7 February 1800. By her he had only one child, a son named PETER RANDOLPH. She died about 1803.

WILLIAM CABANISS, gentleman, who at an early age performed public service for the Revolutionary cause, rose from lieutenant (1789) to major (1798) of the Nottoway County Militia. In 1793 and 1785 he was deputy sheriff and in 1794 escheator for the commonwealth in Nottoway County.

Before William married the widow SOPHIA (SHERWIN) PINCHAM, he had already been married once or twice (more likely twice) and had four children (REBECCA, married --CORKS; WILLIAM, who died young; RUTHA, married first --MOORE and second JOSEPH BARRETT; FRANCES EPES, married PETER VAUGHAN). About 1801 he had one son by SOPHIA (a daughter of SAMUEL SHERWIN, colonel of Amelia Militia in the Revolution, and his wife ELIZABETH RANDOLPH, daughter of HENRY RANDOLPH IV of Henrico and Chesterfield counties, and his wife TABITHA POYTHRESS).

In 1805, after SOPHIA's death, William sold his lands in Virginia and began a series of migrations, first to Kentucky, where in Green County on 2 April 1807 he presumably married POLLY HARPER (his third or fourth wife). It is not certain whether there was issue from this union. By 1820 he was living in Sumner County, Tennessee. In 1821 he purchased land in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, where he had removed.

William's will, dated 8 May 1825, indicates not only that he owned considerable property in land and slaves, but also that he had married once more, DIANA (his fourth or fifth wife), and that there were three later children: NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (who may have been a son by POLLY), DIANA D, and WILLIAM (named for his deceased older brother). The last two were certainly children of DIANA; NAPOLEON B. may have been.

#### References:

Lieutenant of Nottoway Militia, see W. P. Palmer and Sherwin McRae, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, V (Richmond: R.U. Durr, 1885), p. 1; captain, see W. A. Watson, *Notes on Southside Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia State Library Bulletin 15, Nos. 2-4, 1925), p. 75 (citing Nottoway County Order Book 1, 1793-1797, pp. 2, 3); major, Nottoway County Order Book 2, 1797-1801, p. 170; deputy sheriff, Nottoway County Order Book 1, 1793-1797, p. 39, and Watson, *Notes on Southside Virginia*, p. 84; escheator for the commonwealth, Nottoway County Order Book 1, 1793-1797, p. 66; gift to first four children, Nottoway County Deed Book 2, p. 126 (7 February 1800); court cases naming William "and his wife Sophia," Nottoway County Order Book 4, p. 59 (7 November 1801), p. 85 (4 February 1802), p. 167 (6 August 1802); gift to son Peter Randolph, Nottoway County Deed Book 2, p. 443 (1 September 1803); marriage to Polly Harper, Green County Kentucky Marriages, 2 April 1807; 1820 federal census, Sumner County, Tennessee, p. 145; land purchase, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, 21 November 1821, patent issued 12 April 1824 (certified by letter of 22 July 1960, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Land Office, Washington, D.C.); will, naming wife Diana and seven

children, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, Will Book 1, pp. 19, 20 (dated 8 May 1825), printed in *The Alabama Genealogical Register* (now *Register*), I, No. 1 (March 1959), p. 41.

5. PETER RANDOLPH CABANISS, born in Nottoway County, Virginia, about 1801, died in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, before 12 April 1834. He was married there 16 September 1824 to CATHERINE MAYFIELD (born in South Carolina in 1806), who survived him and who was living there on 23 November 1854.

Little is known about PETER RANDOLPH CABANISS, planter, even in family tradition, perhaps because he died so young. He inherited land and slaves from his father, but he seems to have been a speculator in real estate. Although maintaining residence in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, he lived for a while in Holmes and Yazoo counties, Mississippi, where he and his brother-in-law, ELISHA MAYFIELD, accumulated 480 acres with dwellings on them.

Unfortunately Peter Randolph died not only early, but also intestate. His children, therefore, had to suffer the experience of orphans' court and his estate was not settled until 1853 when all the property was converted into cash and distributed among his wife and their five children: WILLIAM R., born in 1825, married MARTHA J. FRIDAY; MADISON (see later); JAMES, born about 1829/30; ELIZABETH (BETSY) ANN, born in 1832, married VOLLIE H. POWELL; OBADIAH, born in 1832, married CLARISSA POWELL. The last two, twins, were born in Mississippi.

#### References:

Marriage, see Pauline J. Gandrud, *Marriage Records of Tuscaloosa County Alabama 1823-1860* (Memphis: Milestone Press, 1968), p. 4 (citing Tuscaloosa County Marriage Book 1823-1845, p. 43); death, notice by administrator (dated 12 April 1834) in the Jackson, Mississippi, *Mississippian*, 19 April 1834 through 30 May 1834; 1830 federal census, Yazoo County, Mississippi, in Irene S. and Norman E. Gillis, *Mississippi 1830 Census* (Baton Rouge, 1965), p. 34; widow and children named in Tuscaloosa County Orphans' Court Book, 1846-1850, p. 33 (dated 12 October 1846), in K.P. Jones and P.J. Gandrud, "Alabama Records" (multi-volumed typescript of abstracts, deposited in many libraries), Vol. 33 (1936), p. 39; also noted in final settlement of estate, Orphans' Court Book, 1850-1854, p. 567 (14 February 1853), in Jones and Gandrud, "Alabama Records," Vol. 57 (1939), p. 40.

6. MADISON CABANISS, born in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, in 1827, died there 15 March 1886. He was buried in Dunn's Creek Church cemetery near Echola, Alabama. About 1844 he was married to EMILINE POWELL (born in 1829, daughter of VOLLIE



and CLARISSA POWELL), who died 24 February 1896. She was buried beside her husband in the Dunn's Creek cemetery.

MADISON CABANISS inherited a modest amount of money from his father, but he spent his life as a small farmer. Seventeen when he married, he had seven or eight children by the opening of the War Between the States. Although his older brother, WILLIAM R., officially entered the Confederate Army, Madison served only informally (he was a combatant in a skirmish near Paint Rock, Alabama). For a while he lived in Marion County, Alabama, but died in his home county of Tuscaloosa.

MADISON and EMILINE had eleven children: MIRANDA, born in 1845, married --LINN; JAMES La FAYETTE (see later); JULIA ANN, born in 1851, married JAMES ALEXANDER SULLIVAN; JOSEPH, born in 1853; MISSOURI, born in 1855, married --LONG; MADISON, born in 1856; MATILDA, born in 1858; MARTHA, married --HAWKINS; RACHEL, married --BROWN; LIZZIE, married --THOMAS; JOHN, born 15 November 1869, died 8 September 1960.

#### References:

Age, wife, and seven children in 1860 federal census, "Free Inhabitants in Eastern Dist. in the County of Marion State of Ala.," No. 348; see also 1850 federal census, "Free Inhabitants in District No. 2 County of Tuscaloosa, State of Alabama," No. 126; letters from and conversation with JOHN CABANISS and JULIA ANN (CABANISS) SULLIVAN and their respective descendants.

7. JAMES LAFAYETTE CABANISS, born 8 March 1849 in Tuscaloosa County, died 2 April 1934 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. He was buried beside his wife in the Crooked Oak Church cemetery, Colbert County, Alabama. On 23 December 1867, presumably in Pickens or Marion County, he was married to his first cousin, LIZA JANE POWELL, daughter of JAMES L. POWELL, a Confederate veteran, and his wife PEACHIE ELIZABETH SHIRLEY. Born 9 April 1850, LIZA JANE died 15 February 1950 in Tuscumbia.

Because of a family disagreement, JAMES LAFAYETTE CABANISS left his home between 1865 and 1867, repudiating his share in the property. After his marriage he went to the newly created county of Colbert, where he farmed his lands and reared his family. About 1895 he removed to the county seat, Tuscumbia, and purchased a home. Except for an interval as town marshal, he cultivated his lands and lived there until his wife's death. In the 1920's he married the widow LIZZIE (HOVATER) HESTER and rescued her home and farm (between Crooked Oak and Russellville) from bankruptcy. There he lived and worked actively until his final illness.

James LaFayette and LIZA JANE had seven

children: JOSEPH ALEXANDER, born 1 May 1869, died in the summer of 1935; JAMES MADISON, born 8 July 1872, died in the mid-1920's; LEONEY, born 1 July 1875, died 15 November 1898; CHARLES, born 25 March 1878, died 17 July 1917; JOHN WARNER, born 15 November 1881, died 12 August 1922; WILLIAM MILTON, born 26 January 1885, died nine days later; LEM (see later).

#### References:

Family Bible of James LaFayette Cabaniss now in possession of his grandson, the author of this sketch; personal knowledge.

8. LEM CABANISS, born 24 August 1888 in Colbert County, Alabama, died 10 April 1934 in Florence, Alabama. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Tuscumbia. On 30 April 1911 in Tuscumbia, he married FRANCES ALLEN, daughter of ELY THOMAS ALLEN and his wife, HARRIET LOGAN WINN (seventh in line of descent from Colonel ROBERT WYNNE, speaker of the Virginia House of Burgesses from 1661 to 1674, and eighth in line from Major General ABRAHAM WOOD). Frances, born 6 September 1885 in Cedar Hill, Tennessee, died 29 June 1966 in Oxford, Mississippi, where she was buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.

After his marriage and the birth of two children, LEM CABANISS removed to Florence, Alabama. There he worked initially as a barber, then as a member of the city police force. For a number of years in his later life he held political appointment as State and County License Inspector. An active member of Masonic bodies, he was Junior Warden of his Lodge when he died.

Lem and Frances has three children: JAMES ALLEN (author of this sketch), born 8 December 1911 in Tuscumbia; FRANCES LUCILLE, born 18 September 1914 in Tuscumbia, married JOHN WINFORD STEPHENS (now divorced), 2 November 1934, and had ELIZABETH ANN (who married BOB C. ORSBURN and had LISA ANN); LEM, JR., born 1 May 1917 in Florence, married THELMA DAVIS (no issue).

#### References:

Respective marriage and birth certificates; personal knowledge.

9. (James) ALLEN CABANISS, Research Professor of History and Historian of the University in The University of Mississippi, and his sister and brother mentioned above.

#### References:

On all the foregoing, see full documentation in Allen Cabaniss, "A Cabaniss Family of the Old Southwest," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XXIII, No. 1 (January 1961), pp. 38-53; Allen Cabaniss, "Cabaniss of Virginia, Alabama, and Mississippi," *Historical Southern Families*, Vol.

V, edited by John B. Boddie (Redwood City, Calif.: Pacific Coast Publishers, 1960), pp. 1-4; Allen Cabaniss, "Cabaniss: A Preliminary Sketch through Five Generations" (a typescript, 1969, placed in the Virginia State Library; a revised edition will appear in November 1970).

---

## Letters & Corrections:

### WYNNE-WYNN-WINN OF VIRGINIA ERRATA

*The Colonial Genealogist*, Vol. III, No. 3 (January 1971), pp. 164-166, Lineage No. 12, by Allen Cabaniss.

p. 165, col. 1, line 32 from top. For JINCY; JERUSHA read JINCY, married as his second wife Richard Stone Jr.; JERUSHA

p. 166, col. 2, lines 14, 15 and top. For had ELIZABETH ANN CABANISS read had ELIZABETH ANN STEPHENS

p. 166, col. 3, line 25 from top. For Magna Carta Dames read Magna Charta Dames [while the organization uses the spelling Charta, it is correctly Carta].

### CABANIS/CABANISS OF VIRGINIA ERRATA

*The Colonial Genealogist*, Vol. III, No. 3 (January 1971), pp. 160-164, Lineage No. 11, by Allen Cabaniss.

p. 161, col. 2, 2nd line from bottom. For and 1795 read and 1795

p. 162, col. 2, line 3 from top. For Genealogical Register (now Register), read Genealogical Registrar (now Register).

p. 162, col. 2, line 8 from top. For CATHERINE MAYFIELD read CATHARINE MAYFIELD

p. 162, col. 2, line 15 from top. For he seems to have been read he seems also to have been

p. 163, col. 1, line 30 from top. For and conversation read and conversations

p. 163, col. 1, line 17 from bottom. For 15 February 1950 read 15 February 1919

### JORIS JANSEN RAPALJE & CATALINA TRICO

Dear Sir,

I appreciated the January copy of your magazine containing the lineage of Leslie Aulls Bryan, a descendant of Joris Jansen Rapalje and Cataline Trico. These were also my nine times great-grandparents. I thought that you might like to know in what particulars your data on this couple differs from my own.

Catalyntie gives her birthplace as Paris, France, N.Y. Colonial Mss. XXXV-Documentary History of the State of New York, E. B. Cailahan, M.D. Albany, Quarto Edition, V III p. 32. The earliest

history of the Dutch occupation of New Netherland is given by Catalyntie in this and another deposition.

George and Catherine were not Huguenot, they were Walloons. The Walloon and Flemish elements in modern Belgium are among modern separatists of which there are so many in the world. Walloons were French speaking Protestants, their language being an off-shoot of French while the Flemish language is Germanic in origin. The Walloons were the Belgii of Caesar's Commentaries: Omnes Gallia in tres partes divisa est...one of the three parts being that of the Belgii, the bravest of them all. Among many proofs of the Walloon origin of this first boatload of Emigrants under the Dutch flag see Introduction to Volume I, *Reformed Dutch Marriages from 11 December 1639 to 25 August 1801*, New York G & B Society, 1890, Samuel Purple, Editor.

Sincerely,  
Dorothy Renick Futtrell  
2400 Pruett Street,  
Austin, Texas 78703

[It is not clear from Mrs. Futtrell's letter if she is aware that "Walloon" is a racial term for the people of primarily Celtic ancestry inhabiting Southern Belgium--it is not a term descriptive of any religious persuasion, as is Huguenot.--Editor.]

### ACADEMIA GUATEMALTECA DE ESTUDIOS GENEALOGICOS, HERALDICOS E HISTORICOS

Muy Señor mío,

...he tenido la oportunidad de conocer la importante publicación y empresa que han acometido, y por la cual atentamente los felicito.... los nombres y direcciones de personas que en Guatemala y El Salvador pueden evacuar consultas de tipo genealógico:

Edgar J. Aparicio y Aparicio, Marqués de Vistabella  
39 Calle "B" 11-36 Zona 8  
Guatemala, Guatemala

Lic. Juan José Falla Sánchez  
11 Calle 7-35, 3er. piso, Zona 1  
Guatemala, Guatemala

Lic. Ramiro Ordóñez Jonama  
12 Calle 11-51 Zona 1  
Guatemala, Guatemala

Julio López Avila de Tirello  
14 Calle Pte. 2322  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Todos somos miembros de la Academia Guatemalteca de Estudios Genealógicos, Heráldicos é Históricos. Sería muy grato para nosotros continuar recibien-

# More Cabanissiana

Allen Cabaniss  
Research Professor of History  
The University of Mississippi  
University, Mississippi 38677

By one of those rare and happy chances that befall a family researcher, there has just come to me information about a hitherto unknown segment of the Cabaniss line. The major data are contained in a delightful letter written by George E. Cabanis to his brother, John Richard Cabaniss of Blanco, Texas (original is in possession of the letter's grandson, Bert L. Cabaniss, Austin, Texas).

The material is best presented by quoting the relevant genealogical portions of the letter and commenting on each part to illustrate how tradition both preserves and obscures history. Annotation is provided where necessary. Each section is given a Roman numeral to expedite cross-reference. The actual spelling, punctuation, and indentation are preserved.

## I.

### Text:

"Big Patch Dec 10th 1882

"Dear Brother.... we are all about as well as usual except Jim he fell from the top of a building and narrowly escaped with his life but he is better now...."

### Commentary:

"Big Patch" was presumably near Platteville, Wisconsin, where George E. Cabanis was living in 1860.<sup>1</sup> "Dear Brother" was John Richard Cabaniss, as identified below in this letter (Section X). Born 3 July 1828 near Springfield, Illinois, John R. was, on 2 October 1858, married to Cornelia McLaine of Kentucky. A year or two later they removed to Missouri near Joplin. His sympathies lay with the South; George's, with the North. In Missouri four children were born to John and Cornelia: Allene (died 1 November 1921); Charles McLaine (25 May 1865--22 November 1937); Scott (23 August 1869--5 February 1923), who married Janie \_\_\_\_; and John R. Jr. (11 October 1871--15 August 1940), unmarried. In the early part of the 1880s this family removed to Texas, first to Blanco, then in the 1890s to Austin, where they operated "The Cabaniss House" (later "Hotel," discontinued in 1940).<sup>2</sup>

"Jim" was probably George's younger son, James H., mentioned in the letter to Lincoln referred to in Note 1 below.

## II.

### Text:

"Grand Father Cabanis had four Sons uncle William Cabanis had 2 Sons cousins of ours by the name of Millford and Charles I think Millford died before he was quite grown Charles went down South and I presume he married down South uncle William had Several girls but I dont know what became of them."

### Commentary:

According to information derived from the Illinois State Journal, John M. and Charles P. Cabaniss, mentioned later in this letter, were born respectively in 1783 and 1786.<sup>3</sup> William, the eldest, was therefore born about 1781.

## III.

### Text:

"Uncle John Cabanis comes next his family you know as well as me."

### Commentary:

There is a great deal of information about John M. Cabaniss in various issues of the Illinois State Journal, especially his obituary on 3 January 1849. According to it he was born in 1783 in London County, Virginia. There is, however, no such county; there is a Loudon, but that is not likely. Much more reasonable is Lunenburg County. He removed with his parents to Kentucky in 1792. There he served for a while as constable. In the War of 1812 he was at the siege of Fort Meigs (called "battle of Thames") and in the battle of New Orleans. From the latter engagement, as commander of a company of Kentucky volunteers, he derived the title "captain" by which he was thereafter known. Late in 1830 he removed to Springfield, Illinois, where he spent the remainder of his life.<sup>4</sup>

In 1834 John M. was on a committee to select the speaker for an occasion honoring General James Dougherty Henry, a "forgotten hero" of 1812;<sup>5</sup> and in 1841 on a committee to pay homage to General William Henry Harrison.<sup>6</sup> As a member of the Clay Club executive committee of Sangamon County, Illinois, he signed with others a letter inviting Henry Clay to Springfield.<sup>7</sup> In 1844 and again in 1847 he ran successfully for the office of constable.<sup>8</sup> After his death his estate was settled by Z. P. Cabaniss (his son?) as administrator.<sup>9</sup>

Captain John M. Cabaniss was probably the original behind one of Edgar Lee Master's Spoon River Anthology



poems. On his wife and children, see Sections VI and XII below.

-----  
IV.

Text:

"Next comes Charles P. Cabanis our Father of course you know as much as I do of our family."

Commentary:

The death notice of Charles P. on 12 January 1833 stated that he was born in 1786 in Virginia and that he left his wife and five children,<sup>10</sup> on whom see Section VI below.

-----  
V.

Text:

"Next comes uncle George L cabanis the youngest of the 4 brothers."

Commentary:

George L. was therefore born after 1786, presumably as late as 1791 or afterwards. On his family, see Section VIII below.

George E., writer of this letter, was obviously what would today be called a "male chauvinist," seldom naming any females in the family. Thus he ignored a sister of the four brothers, Lucy, supposed to have been born about 1785, who married David Calhoun Caldwell in Green County, Kentucky. Caldwell disappeared from sight during the War of 1812 and Lucy removed with her children to Huntsville, Alabama (then Mississippi Territory).<sup>11</sup>

-----  
VI.

Text:

"uncle John and Father and uncle George married 3 Sister Lucy wagoner Mary P. Wagoner (our mother) and Catharine wagoner uncle Georges wife."

Commentary:

The father of the Wagoner girls is indicated below (Section X), as are the progeny of John M. and Lucy (Section XII) and of George L. and Catharine (Section VIII). The children of Charles P. and Mary P. (Wagoner) Cabaniss were George E. (see Section XIII below for birth-date), Catharine Minerva (see Section XV below for birth-date and marriage), and John Richard (see Section I above). There were two other children, but nothing is known of them.

-----  
VII.

Text:

"when Father moved from Kentucky to Sangamon I was 7 years old."

Commentary:

That is, in 1822; see Section XIII below.

-----  
VIII.

Text:

"I remember uncle Georges first children were all girls but after we left they had Some Boys and Aunt Catharine died when the rebellion broke out and uncle

George was union and Boys were rebs and He had to leave Ky.... he went to a little Town in Southern Ill. called Columbus...and an old Maid and School Mam by the name of Earl went...down there to teach School and He married Her.... uncle George has been dead about 2 years and his widow is living in Bloomington Ill...."

Commentary:

Thus Catharine died and George L. removed from Kentucky to Illinois about 1861. There were no children by the second wife. George L. died in 1880.

According to Mrs. Mack Hill, née Dorothy Morehead, Chico, California, in a letter to me dated 30 November 1972, George L. was born 19 November 1792. He married (first) Catharine Wagoner on 18 April 1815 (she was born in Kentucky on 22 February 1795). One of their children was Edwin Wing Cabaniss (22 March 1831, Hopkinsville, Kentucky--2 February 1905, Clinton, Mississippi). On 13 November 1854 he married Margaret Nutt New, scion of an illustrious family in Mississippi. Mrs. Hill is their granddaughter.

-----  
IX.

Text:

"there was 2 Brothers Came from Paris in France"

Commentary:

Henri Cabanis, a French Protestant refugee, did not come from Paris, but at any rate from France to England, thence to Virginia in July 1700, where he was settled for a while at Manakin Town.<sup>12</sup> On the same ship, the *Mary and Ann*, there was another immigrant, Isaac Chabanas, who may have been, indeed probably was, Henri's elder brother.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting that memory of the French ancestry was handed down in the family. Ten years after this letter and from a different area of the country was published a sketch of Judge Elbridge Gerry Cabaniss of Georgia<sup>14</sup> in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, II (New York: J. T. White and Co., 1892), p. 137, also alluding to the Huguenot lineage.

-----  
X.

Text:

"our grand Father was one called John Cabanis his wife our grandmother before She was married was named Elizabeth Longmire our grand Father on our mother's side was named Richard Wagoner you was named for both of them"

Commentary:

If by this statement, which follows immediately on the preceding one, George E. intended to assert that his grandfather was one of two French refugee brothers, he was in error. But he may have intended a break in thought between the two statements and quite simply that his grandfather was a man named John Cabanis.

The marriage of a John Cabaniss to Elizabeth — is confirmed by a notation that on 9 October 1779 John sold land in Lunenburg County, Virginia, and that "Elizabeth the wife of the said John relinquished her right of Dower."<sup>15</sup>

At last George E. identified his brother's name and that of the Wagoner girls' father.

XI.

Text:

"they lived in Barren County and we lived in green Co; adjoining Barren...."

Commentary:

"They" were the Wagoners and "we" the Cabanisses.

XII.

Text:

"uncle Jacks family were all dead but Lucy and Mary Jane unless Ethan is living we dont know anything of him or his family."

Commentary:

Here we have three children of John M. identified, namely, Lucy, Mary Jane, and Ethan. There was presumably another son, Z.P., administrator of John's estate (see Section III above), and perhaps still another, Dr. John "Cabinas," who attended Jonathan Colby in 1850.<sup>16</sup> There was definitely another daughter, Eliza Catharine, clearly indicated in the notice of her marriage to Virgil Hickox, Springfield, late in September 1839.<sup>17</sup>

Ethan T. was also a physician. For a while he lived in Monmouth, Illinois.<sup>18</sup> Later, his hobby developing into a major feature of his life, he became a daguerrotypist and a painter.<sup>19</sup> In the spring of 1849, after his father's death, he joined the migration to California.<sup>20</sup>

XIII.

Text:

"I was born Sept 7th 1815 and Polly anne was born Feb 17th 1821...."

Commentary:

According to his niece, George E. married a sister of her father Abram Lanterman.<sup>21</sup> The name Polly Anne has not been preserved in the list of children of John and Elizabeth Lanterman. Since three variants exist, however, it cannot be certain that Polly Anne was not a Lanterman.<sup>22</sup>

XIV.

Text:

"George has graduated and is Teaching High school in Platteville...."

Commentary:

Platteville, Wisconsin, was the residence of George E. in 1860, in which year he and his wife had only two sons, both of voting age. The youngest was James H. and thus born at least by 1839.<sup>23</sup> The older son was obviously born before that year. The "George" mentioned in the letter above, if a son of George E., would therefore be about forty-five years of age. So it would appear that he may have been a grandson, not a son, of George E., but there is no certainty.

XV.

Text:

"Send greeting to Abram and his folks our Holiday well wishes. Please accept our best wishes for you all and permit me to Subscribe my Self yours as Ever

G. E. Cabanis"

Commentary:

"Abram" was probably Abram Lanterman, already mentioned. Born 22 December 1812, on 16 April 1840, married to Catharine Minerva (born 22 May 1819, living as late as 1896), daughter of Charles P. and Mary P. (Wagoner) Cabaniss. Children of this union were Catharine Minerva, John Lewis, Mary Janey, Charley Cabaniss (18th August 1848--20 August 1932), Abram Marion (born 27 February 1850), Josephine (born 16 December 1854), Cyrus Reed (born 16 April 1856), Laura Frances (born 11 February 1859), Georgetta (12 August 1860--26 December 1957), Newton (born 20 March 1862), Kitty Clyde (born 21 March 1864; married Henry Ackerman), and another girl before John Lewis.<sup>24</sup> Laura Frances married Odom; Georgetta married first C. C. Reed in Hays County, Texas, and after he died in 1905, married second George Ellis. Laura, Georgetta, and their uncle, George E. Cabanis were the letterwriters and preservers of so much of the family tradition.<sup>25</sup>

XVI.

Text:

(Postscript) "the name Cabanis was until Ethan Cabanis changed it was Cabaniss he thought on[e] S would be sufficient...."

Commentary:

Ethan was technically correct. The immigrant Henry, in his will, spelled his and his three sons' surname with a single S. Very quickly, however, the eldest began to vary the usage from a B and a single S to V and ultimately a double S. The two younger sons added an extra S, but stubbornly clung to the B. Over a period of time the CABANISS spelling has been insistently maintained by descendants of those two, while descendants of the oldest son have more or less normalized their spelling to CAVINESS, although several variants are allowed.

In the family of John and Elizabeth (Longmire) Cabaniss, all inherited and continued the double S except in the case of Ethan and his cousin George E. It is very interesting to note their particular reversion to the original spelling. Ethan, being a physician, had probably studied some French and perhaps knew about the rather important French scientist and author, Dr. Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis (1757-1808). The modern French branches of the family spell the name as the Huguenot immigrant did. In the south of France a final S is pronounced, as it is not in standard Parisian French.<sup>27</sup>

XVII.

Text:

(Postscript) "Hannah and Lee are living in Georgetown. Lee will be 21 next month...."

Commentary:

Cabanis  
11

These are probably George's grandchildren as in the case of George, the high school teacher mentioned earlier, but they may be children of a second marriage. Lee, living in December 1882 in Georgetown, Illinois, was born in January 1862 (as George E. indicates), when the latter was forty-seven years old.

#### Conclusion

Much of the foregoing is confirmed by the Kentucky census of 1830. Both John M. and George L. were living in Todd County. The former, aged 40-49 years, with a wife of the same age range, had eight children: five males, three aged 20-29, two 15-19; three females, two 10-14, one under five; and four slaves. George L. is listed as 30-39 years of age and so is his wife. They had in their family one male under five, two females 5-9, three females 10-14, one male 20-29 (surely not a son), and four slaves. Their brother, "Will," aged 40-49, and his wife, within the same bracket, were still living in Green County. They had in their household four males, one 20-29, one 15-19, one 10-14, one under five; and five females, one 15-19, two 10-14, two 5-9; but no slaves.

Confusion, however, enters the picture with another John, as yet unidentified, in Green County, aged 40-49, and his wife aged similarly. They, too, had no slaves, but a household of two males, one 15-19, one under five; and five females, one 15-19, one 10-14, two 5-9, and one under five. Obviously, by virtue of date and name, this John cannot have been either the father or the brother of Will, John M., George L., and Charles P., but without further data, speculation would be useless.

In the census of 1840 George L. was still living in Kentucky (Christian County), recorded as 40-49 years of age, as was his wife. In his family were two females, one 15-19, one 0-4; and two males, one 10-14, one 5-9. There were three slaves, one person engaged in agriculture, and one in manufacturing and trade. According to the same census his brother William had removed from Green to Christian County; his age was given as 50-59, as also was his wife's. There were two males in the family: one 20-29, one 10-14; and four females--one 20-29, two 15-19, and one 10-14. There were no slaves, but three persons were engaged in agriculture. These are the only Cabanisses listed in Kentucky in 1840: John M. had already gone to Illinois, as indicated above, and the other John had disappeared. A logical candidate for John, father of William, John M., Charles P., and George L. is John, son of Charles, son of Matthew, son of Henri the immigrant.<sup>28</sup> But much additional research needs to be done.

#### NOTES

1 In the Library of Congress Lincoln Collection there is a letter from George E. Cabanis to Abraham Lincoln dated 12 August 1860. Therein Cabanis names his father, his second son, his residence (Platteville, Wisconsin), and the fact that his two sons were of voting age. See Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VIII, p. 431.

2 Letters, Bert L. Cabaniss (son of Scott and grandson of John R.), Austin, Texas, to me, dated 19 October and 14 November 1972.

3 Their obituaries in the *Illinois State Journal*: Charles, issue of 12 January 1833, p. 3; John M., 3 Jan-

uary 1849, p. 1.

4 See the preceding note.

5 Frank E. Stevens, "A Forgotten Hero: General James Dougherty Henry," *Illinois State Historical Society Library Publication*, No. 41 (1934), pp. 77-120.

6 *Illinois State Journal*, 16 April 1841, p. 3.

7 Letter quoted in Basler, *op. cit.*, I, p. 297.

8 *Illinois State Journal*, 23 May 1844, p. 2, and 15 April 1847, p. 3.

9 *Ibid.*, 14 March 1849, p. 3.

10 See note 3 above.

11 Allen Cabaniss, *Cabaniss Through Four Generations: Some Descendants of Matthew and George* (privately printed, 1972), p. 17.

12 Summarized from Cabaniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5, where full documentation is presented.

13 Alloa C. Anderson, *Henry Cavinis, The Immigrant Infant and Some of His Descendants* (privately printed, 1971), pp. xvii, 16, 403-430. This book is a beautiful bit of genealogical detective work.

14 See Cabaniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 28f.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 12, but note that I have placed the statement under another John.

16 Lydia Colby, "Jonathan Colby, Pioneer," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, XVII, No. 3 (October 1924), p. 433.

17 *Illinois State Journal*, 4 October 1839, p. 3.

18 *Ibid.*, 23 February 1833, p. 1.

19 *Ibid.*, 15 May 1840, p. 2.

20 *Ibid.*, 28 March 1849, p. 3.

21 Laura (Lanterman) Odom, who died about 1947, letter to Bert L. Cabaniss, undated.

22 Bible record, copied by Andrew Jackson Lanterman in 1885, preserved by Mrs. Georgetta (Lanterman) Ellis; a typed sheet (also in Mrs. Ellis's possession), deriving from John Richard Cabaniss Jr.; another copy of the Bible record, preserved by Mrs. Odom. The first names nine children; the second, twelve; and the third, twelve, but notes that Mrs. Odom remembered "Aunt Polly" (Mary), wife of George E. Cabanis, and that she still had a newspaper account of her funeral stating that she was born 17 February 1821.

23 See note 1 above.

24 Bible record in the possession of Mrs. Ellis; see also note 22 above.

25 Numerous letters preserved by Mrs. Ellis until her death, now in the possession of Mrs. John Rayburn, Oxford, Mississippi, who aided me in this research.

26 See Cabaniss, *op. cit.*, and Anderson, *Henry Cavinis*.

27 Cabaniss, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

(The *Illinois State Journal* cited often above has gone by several different names, but it is so classified by the State Historical Society in Springfield, Illinois.)